

# Pine-Richland dethrones North Allegheny in Class 4A volleyball

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Chaz Palla | Tribune-Review

Pine-Richland celebrates beating North Allegheny's in the WPIAL Class 4A volleyball championship match Saturday at UPMC Events Center.

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Wake up, [Pine-Richland](#). It's as real as it gets. You're a WPIAL champion.

"You know, I've been having this dream for about four months, where I can vividly see us winning the WPIAL finals and listening to 'We Are The Champions,'" [Pine-Richland](#) girls volleyball coach Angela Seman said.

It's not a dream, coach. They're playing your song.

Pine-Richland ended [North Allegheny](#)'s unbeaten run this season by upsetting the top-seeded Tigers on Saturday night in the WPIAL Class 4A championship match 3-2 at Robert Morris' UPMC Events Center.

The second-seeded Rams (16-2) outscored [North Allegheny](#), 5-1, down the stretch of the fifth and deciding set to come away as an unlikely winner on scores of 25-21, 20-25, 25-22, 15-25, 15-11.

“This is amazing. I’ve been wishing for this moment since my freshman year,” said Pine-Richland senior outside hitter Kaili Doctor, whose emphatic kill ended the marathon, 2½-hour match and sent the Rams into a frenzy on the hardwood court. “We’ve always ended up short in the playoffs. Making it this far is so amazing. ... I’m so proud of our team.”

Pine-Richland, just like every other opponent, was swept in both of its regular-season meetings with North Allegheny (18-1), the No. 1-ranked team in the Pennsylvania Volleyball Coaches Association Class 4A poll.

But the Rams, ranked seventh in the poll, started off the night in fine fashion by ending North Allegheny’s 57-set winning streak dating to last season by winning the first set.

“I give a lot of credit to Pine-Richland. They played really, really well tonight,” North Allegheny coach Russ Hoburg said. “It wasn’t our finest night. The good news is we get an opportunity moving forward. This is the one match you can lose and still be alive in the state playoffs.”

Both teams advance and will be the WPIAL’s representatives in the PIAA playoffs beginning Tuesday.

North Allegheny, which had claimed the past two WPIAL titles and four of the past five, hadn’t lost a set since dropping the first to Parkland before rallying for a 3-1 victory to capture its fifth consecutive PIAA championship Nov. 20, 2021.

“We felt off a little bit all night,” Hoburg said. “It was a weird feel for us. I actually apologized because I felt like I was out of sorts a little bit. I found myself talking to the official quite a bit. My focus wasn’t quite there and so, it just wasn’t our best night.”

Doctor, a North Carolina A&T commit, led Pine-Richland with 26 kills. Katie Yanni added 16 kills, while Sofia Morse contributed 24 assists and Isabelle Hoppe chipped in 21 for the Rams, whose only two losses were to North Allegheny.

“We came into the season and set a goal to win the WPIAL finals,” Seman said. “These girls worked hard every day at practice, never gave up, let me push them. We were put in some really tough situations at the beginning of the season and that only helped us for a game like this.

“Our first goal was to win the WPIAL finals and our second goal is to win the state finals. I’ll have to look at the bracket when it comes out, but I think we’ll have a really good chance. We’re just going to keep pushing.”

North Allegheny appeared to be turning around its misfortune by dominating the fourth set and tying the match 2-2 with its 10-point victory.

“It might have been we were backing off a little bit and we shouldn’t have,” Doctor said. “I knew we would wipe that off and come back harder.”

The Rams certainly didn’t sit still, pulling away in the final set to secure the victory, their fourth WPIAL title and first in Class 4A (They won in Class 3A in 2001, 2005 and 2010.).

Ella Deeter paced North Allegheny with 14 kills. Mia Tuman, an Ohio State commit, added 42 assists and Mackenzie Jones contributed 24 digs.

Hoburg obviously was disappointed with the outcome, but the second-year coach who spent time previously as a North Allegheny assistant recalled a similar scenario in 2019.

“We lost the WPIAL championship three years ago to Canon-MacMillan and then went on to win the state championship,” Hoburg said. “We’ve been here before in that sense and so, we hope we can get another crack at (Pine-Richland).”

Tags: [North Allegheny](#), [Pine-Richland](#)

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